2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

437 wealth; and the rewards of the society do not go to those who can manipulate the trading situation. Land cannot be traded, and cattle, the only other recognizable form of wealth, are completely absorbed in the *mumyualo* exchanges. For the rest, the economic unit is as nearly as possible self-sufficient. There are occasional shortages, but usually they affect everybody more or less equally. The volume of internal trade, apart from gift exchange, was and still is insignificant. There are no markets, and skilled workers do not usually produce articles in anticipation of the needs of others. Hoes were, and pots still are, exchanged for agricultural products. The small interchange of agricultural products in normal times never unduly benefited one man at the expense of another. Animals constantly died, but only those people who had little consideration for their relatives—for elaborate rules exist as to the distribution of the various parts of an animal—thought of selling the meat. In abnormal times people sold and still sell cattle: the instinct of self-preservation overrides the sentiments against tampering with one of the main pillars of the social structure.

The Lovedu are in this respect wholly unlike their neighbours, the Shangana-Tonga, who undertook commercial journeys and had companies of carriers with elaborate organization and sharing of profits. The earliest Europeans constantly mention the begging propensities and topsy-turvy economic conceptions of the Lovedu. And even now it is useless to attempt to buy a valuable thing from them. You may succeed in getting it by begging or appealing to sentiment or showing how much you need it. With a Shangana-Tonga you may bargain; with a Lovedu bargaining arouses suspicion, the suspicion that you are making a profit out of his ignorance, and it is considered better to give than to sell. Begging is not [735] socially disapproved; it is contrasted, not with self-reliance, but with theft; and a man, it is said, should always ask for, not steal, the things of another. Begging is really the counterpart of mutual helpfulness, of the feeling of dependence on one another. Where such sentiments have a right of existence, even in royalty itself, the only consideration that evokes a sympathetic response in the trading situation is the need of the person who wishes to transact the exchange. A man does not sell for his personal gain and the price is not a matter of great moment; either goods have their fixed price or they have no price at all. The situation is always an embarrassing one. The Lovedu, in short, have no commercial instincts; they have been conditioned to mutual helpfulness and non-competitive trading.

437 They distinguish sharply between trade carried on in the traditional
●577 manner and what they call 'bizmis' (business), which generally involves
795 money transactions and is associated with subterfuge and personal gain. 'Bizmis' is beyond the pale of decency; it is specially debased in the hands of those upstarts who hold initiation schools for their own personal profit. The most depraved people are the few Christians, who, in league with Europeans or on their own account, constitute themselves as middlemen and exploit their fellow men. They are *dibava*, deceivers and breakers of promises, comparable only with prostitutes who 'are eaten on the road'. The Christian Church, with its fees and collections, falls,

2: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1943
FX14 Lovedu FX14

to the Lovedu manner of thinking, within the 'bizmis' scheme: one buys baptism and confirmation; at communion one pays for the flesh and blood of Christ. How different is the institution of *munywalo*. No wonder the work of the Church is infinitely difficult.

437
577
795

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14

An omen or bane (*lesola*) presages death or disaster, but it may itself be the cause of the evil that follows. An owl hooting outside a hut, cats crying plaintively (not caterwauling) at night, presage disaster, for cats have uncanny insight; a mountain snake can be a *lesola*, and so can a *leshega*, i.e. a person whose teeth have appeared in the wrong order. A person will *tola* another, i.e. cause misfortune or death to descend upon a member of the latter's family, by swearing badly at him, especially if the words are out of all proportion to the offence or provocation.

These concepts of natural luck, accident, and omens are thus also linked with human relationships. Good relations with near relatives may bring you good luck, bad relations, especially with your father or father's sister, bad luck or illness to your children. In fact any man who despises the great, particularly his father, will, it is said, see him in the bones as the cause of his misfortune, especially if the old man dies before a reconciliation has been effected. An old man's scolding or curse is an omen (*vusola*) which portends and causes misfortune to a near relative of the person scolded, and the grievance of one's sister or father's sister, even if it is unconscious, generates a force (*mahava*) which brings illness upon one's children and which can be neutralized only by a religious rite. The exact relation between *mahava* and the ancestors is not very clear. The Lovedu conceive *mahava* as following automatically from the bad relationship between important kin. Yet reconciliation, which removes the source of the *mahava*, is not enough for putting matters right. It is the ancestors that must remove the illness at the request of the aggrieved party.

Witchcraft and Sorcery (Vulɔi)

The evils that have so far been mentioned are either inherent in nature or only vaguely brought into relation with the conduct and relationships between men. Their effects except in a few cases are mild, rarely ending in death. In a completely different category is the greatest and most devastating source of evil *vulɔi* (witchcraft and sorcery), brought about directly by man. *Vulɔi* is, by Lovedu conceptions, always due to the conscious, evil practices of man and is directed at persons he has reason to hate.[1] *Vulɔi* is morally reprehensible, and witches and sorcerers are the arch enemies of society. The concept of *vulɔi* explains evil in terms of the malicious wickedness in men's hearts; it is criminality incarnate in man. The term *vulɔi* covers both witchcraft and sorcery; nevertheless the Lovedu make a clear distinction between witchcraft (*vulɔi vya vusiu*—night witchcraft) and sorcery (*vulɔi vya matsiare*—day witchcraft). The night-witch uses sinister inherited powers which extend beyond the ordinary course of nature. The sorcerer uses the natural, known powers of medicine for anti-social ends. Witchcraft implies possession of power to do evil transcending the under-

[1] Neighbouring Venda and Tsonga conceive the witch as constrained to evil by heredity but unconscious of his own evil acts.

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14

in the use of motor traffic. Are not people more important than speed? The need for even a chief to respect the wishes of his subjects upon whom he depends for a following is summed up in the saying, *Vuhosi gi vatho*, 'chieftainship is people'.

The qualities or virtues that are stressed, then, in the moral code of the Lovedu are moderation and temperance, compromise and agreement, humility, respect for the personality and rights of others. Courage is not rated very high in this non-military society. Perseverance is often enjoined and is especially necessary in the monotonous tasks of hoeing, carrying heavy loads of wood, walking up steep mountain slopes; but it is never carried out with the single-mindedness that a European might expect. Theft is condemned and there are ritual sanctions against it. If the object stolen has been magically treated, for example, a painful sore will develop on the finger which defies treatment until guilt has been confessed and restitution agreed to. 'Don't steal, always beg (*hobela*) for what you want', children are exhorted. But theft is not a problem in this economically undifferentiated society, though nowadays cases of theft, even if extremely rarely, do come before the tribal courts. Drunkenness is bad only if it leads to neglect of duties or fights and quarrels. To be drunk is in itself no disgrace, it is merely pleasant and perhaps exhilarating, not a condition to be ashamed of. Indeed everyone looks forward to the *murula* season when all become slightly intoxicated from the cider made out of the fruits.

Right conduct is relative always to the human situation and morality is oriented not from any absolute standards of honesty or truth but from the social good in each situation. Conduct that promotes smooth relationships, that upholds the social structure, is good; conduct that runs counter to smooth social relationships is bad. Courtesy and the respect due to age or seniority are thus of greater importance than truth. A son-in-law who, tired of always being imposed upon by his wife's father, truthfully signified his unwillingness to help him by providing a goat would be guilty, in view of the special mutualities between families related by marriage, of unpardonable behaviour which might jeopardize his marriage. The correct procedure is to agree to help but to be always 'still looking for it' when approached for the goat. It took us a long time to discover that the right way to deal with incessant begging was not to refuse however politely, but to say 'I have none' or 'It is not mine to give'. The polite lie even if palpable is better calculated to maintain smooth relationships than strict adherence to truth. Truth is not good in itself nor is a lie always evil. Lies are objected to when they are socially inconvenient. Yet not only is it expected that a man will lie to get out of difficulties but there are cases in which lying is prescribed, as when children are told to lie to strangers if asked about village affairs. To keep tribal secrets and the secrets of initiation schools is of far greater importance than to tell the truth.

The social orientation of morality is clear in Lovedu sex morality. Sex is not regarded as a temptation to be resisted by painful efforts of will.

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14

There is nothing morally wrong in sex or the sex act; not only is sex play among small children connived at, but premarital sex relations are institutionalized. It is only having a child before marriage that is immoral. For adultery restitution must be made, yet a husband who is jealous and watches his wife too closely is despised, and most men and women have extra-marital lovers (*vatavo*). The Lovedu attitude is less strict than that of the Tsonga living among them, for Tsonga married women are expected to be faithful to their husbands, and the compensation and fine for adultery are far higher than among the Lovedu. The Lovedu attitude to sex is matter-of-fact, and obscenity in ritual does not have a prominent role. Sex is handled with moderation: men are warned against the dangers of promiscuity, they learn from their proverb that 'a woman's pubes may break up a family', but passion is not esteemed and sex techniques are undeveloped.

To anyone brought up in the West European culture, where every breach of the moral code is also a sin in the eyes of a God who may punish the wrongdoer either in this life or the hereafter, an arresting aspect of Lovedu culture is that there is only a vague connexion between the ancestor-gods and morality. It has been said for the South Bantu in general, and by more than one authority, that the ancestors 'are the guardians of the moral code, it is they in the first instance who are thought of as visiting on their descendants punishments for some omission or commission'[1] There is among Lovedu a vague idea that failure to carry out one's kinship obligations may bring ancestral displeasure in the form of bad luck, and there may also be some connexion between such displeasure and *mahava*, the force generated by complaints of living kin, which causes illness. But a careful study of Lovedu religious practices over a period of years has brought to light no single instance in which ancestors have complained about anything not immediately concerning their own personal relations with their descendants—their right to tendance, remembrance, and propitiation; the manner of their burial; their desire to be told of major events in the lives of living kin. No ancestor has ever been known to concern himself with the theft, witchcraft, murder, or adultery of any descendant, nor do they trouble about the breaking of taboos which prevent rain and vitally affect the welfare of all. Lovedu ancestors are not upholders of custom in general; they are concerned only with those customs and taboos which affect their own welfare and that of their kin. Even royal ancestors do not concern themselves with the breaking of taboos that lead to drought. This is not a reflection of their carelessness or supineness, for they are quick to complain if, for example their graves are desecrated. On one occasion in 1938, when two men had cut firewood in the bush near the royal burial grounds at Maulwi, the *zwidajani* wailed all night to indicate their displeasure. Again when Mologwane, deceased chief councillor and brother of the queen, held her

[1] A. W., Hoernlé, 'Religion in Native Life', in *Thinking with Africa*, edited by Milton Stauffer, 1928, p. 100. See also, W. C. Willoughby, *The Soul of the Bantu*, 1928, pp. 381–90.

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14

577 769 arms' to cause drought in 1938, it was because he had for personal reasons been buried, at his own express request made before death, in the Christian cemetery instead of in the damp shade of the forest, like his forebears.

577 593 It would appear that this lack of interest on the part of the ancestral gods in the morality of their descendants is in conformity with the pattern of the relationship between living parents and their children. Parental protection and care are given not by virtue of the morality or conduct of their children; it is one of the imperatives of the kinship bond. A parent loves his wayward, bad son as much as, if not more than, his well-behaved, virtuous children. It is only a bad personal relationship between parent and child or neglect of filial duty that could cause a parent to withhold his protection.

626 Sanctions for right behaviour are, first and most important, the pressure of public opinion and of the reciprocal arrangements of the political and social structure. A man conforms to the code because of his self-esteem and the high regard he has for his reputation for fairness and moderation, wisdom and ability to get on with others, generosity and helpfulness, not merely among his kin but in the wider circle of his friends and neighbours. The next important group of sanctions are the pain and misfortune that may follow if those he has injured use vengeance magic or resort to witchcraft and sorcery against him. Certain types of conduct carry their own automatic ritual sanctions which form a third group of deterrents, even though there is little pressure of public opinion against the conduct and no necessary or immediate consequence to the person himself, unless indeed he is repeatedly guilty. Finally, duties towards the ancestors, such as tendance and recognition, have the religious sanctions of ancestral anger in the form of illness, or misfortune. Ancestral displeasure can also be inferred as a sanction acting indefinitely and over a vague area of conduct to reinforce men's obligations to kin, generally those kin who stand to them in a relation of some authority. This inference may be made, not because ancestors ever directly cause misfortune to a descendant for breaches of correct behaviour to kin as they do in the case of neglect of themselves, but because bad luck may be attributed to failure in one's duties to kin.

626 769

[769] 577 Ancestor worship of the Lovedu plays hardly any part, then, in upholding tribal morality. Nor are people so delicately conditioned to the values of the society that they spontaneously react to conscience. Their moral code is not markedly internalized and Lovedu have no sense of 'sin'. Since there are few repressed fears the pressure of which on the mind can be removed by confession and atonement, a sense of guilt seldom moves men, and offenders very rarely repent merely at the dictates of conscience. Their sense of shame is more delicately internalized, but it drives men to make restitution only when the misdeed has been exposed or brought into relation with the system of reciprocities. Lovedu are sensitive mainly to the intangible forces of the social system, and the moral code is upheld mainly

4: Krige and Krige E-5 (1928-1939)1954
FX14 Lovedu FX14

by the institutions and by the reciprocal duties and responsibilities between individuals and groups inherent in the social structure.

Effects of Culture Contact

This picture of the world view of the Lovedu presents living practices and conceptions, not a dead and reconstructed past. Christianity has, indeed, modified some aspects of the culture: Christians are prevented from performing their kinship obligations in the traditional manner; they have accepted European ideas of trade for profit and use institutions such as the work-party for the exploitation of their fellows; but witchcraft, which they are supposed to have rejected, is as a result of increased tensions even more rampant among Christians than pagans. Christians substitute God for the ancestors, but continue to believe that the queen makes rain, albeit by the will of God. They tend to discredit the powers of charms but not of *vuŋaga*, while 'heat', *makhuma*, and 'shadow' are still real forces, and the underlying conceptions of the causation of disease and misfortune still hold sway. Even these minor modifications have to be viewed in the light of the fact that Christians constitute only about 5 per cent. of the tribe and are relatively isolated.

The influence of Western culture as a whole is more insidious. The knowledge acquired by young men working in the towns and returning to the tribe holds implications as regards the nature of the universe and the destiny and purpose of man which they cannot harmonize with the traditional world view. They tend to despise what the old men cannot or will not make intelligible to them, such as the significance of the *digɔma* and the *zwidajani* which appear to them to be shams. This attitude and the inadequate response to it lead to lack of respect for their elders and for traditional values and institutions. But the total effect is minimized by the reassertion of the old values as the young men grow older, begin to play a part and to have a stake in the culture. Moreover, they are sensitive to insinuations that their doubts are due to the white man's insidious influences and soon repress them as unworthy and disloyal.

The younger generation tend to shirk unpleasant responsibilities. Thus Jim refused to take over the family office of keeper of the rain-medicine, fearing the risk of sterility which handling of this medicine entails. The absence of many adult men, who are away as migrant labourers, makes the organization of the great ceremonials difficult. Reconciliation and the restitutive sanction are no longer the great forces they used to be, since the closely knit system of reciprocities, everyone's dependence upon day-to-day mutualities and the imperativeness for social life of co-operation, no longer exert the irresistible pressure on the parties to carry out compromises reached in the courts. Aggrieved litigants, reluctant still to invoke European intervention, increasingly resort to magicians who have developed a whole new system of revenge magic to even up matters. The trend is to put their faith in magical retaliation rather than in the sanction of reciprocity.